



## The Modern Era of IN.gov: An Overview of Indiana's State Government Web Portal

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June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023

*The IN.gov Program, a partnership between the State of Indiana and Tyler Indiana, is responsible for the design, development, and maintenance of more than 330 State websites and 125 online services. Providing services for Indiana government partners for more than 25 years, the IN.gov Program continues to bring digital innovations to the state, receiving more than 100 awards in the past 4 years.*



[www.in.gov/iot](http://www.in.gov/iot)

The IN.gov program began in 1995 when the Department of Information Technology (DOIT) signed a contract with a company named Access Indiana. In 2005 DOIT was reformed into the Indiana Office of Technology (IOT) as part of an effort to consolidate IT organizations across the State of Indiana. The following year, IOT opened a new contract with Access Indiana, today known as Tyler Indiana. This contract began the IN.gov partnership model that exists today, wherein Indiana collects transaction fees and pays the company a retainer.

The modern era of the IN.gov program began with new management in 2020. The primary operations of the IN.gov team are managing several contracts held by the State of Indiana with vendors and providing quality customer service for state and local government agencies who utilize the services provided by these contracts. The services that the IN.gov program offers include the following: the IN.gov state web portal, two major payment processing contracts, IN.gov portal-related third-party tools, and IN.gov local government services.

## Web Portal

The IN.gov Web Portal is one of the key parts of the IN.gov program, tracing its origins to the executive order which established IOT as an agency. The establishment of this new agency included the IN.gov branding initiative, which worked to migrate existing state websites to a standardized content management system. The migration process occurred over two years, from 2006 to 2008, and included approximately 90 sites.

By 2013, the IN.gov program had expanded to include approximately 200 services, such as professional licensing and payment applications. During the past eight years, the IN.gov program has evolved significantly, maturing as an organization by standardizing processes, increasing documentation efforts, and following a streamlined systems development lifecycle. To accomplish this evolutionary process, the IN.gov program drafted formal standard operating procedures (SOPs), implemented new project management portfolio tools, and invested in enterprise solutions and portal-related third-party tools to serve state and local government agencies' needs.

The program has developed significantly, and the vendor-partner relationship has been tightly coupled over the last few years under current management. The modern IOT IN.gov management is much more involved in day-to-day operations. It assists in helping projects move along, providing transparency and mitigating risks, and helping to bring attention to concerns as they arise so that they can address issues.

## Payment Processing

### Background

In 2005 as part of IOT's statutory formation, it was conferred the responsibility of managing payment processing for the State. First, Legislature established that state agencies could accept electronic payments online, specifically via the "computer gateway administered by the office of technology" (State and Local Administration, Electronic payment, [IC 5-27-3-1](#) (2022)).

In addition, IC 5-27-3-2 specified that state government agencies must use the payment processor provided by IOT for all forms of electronic payment, which are defined to include credit and debit card payments, not necessarily just those made online (State and Local Administration, Electronic payment definition, [IC 5-27-3-2](#) (2022)).

Prior to 2017, payment processing at the State of Indiana consisted of a Quantity Purchase Agreement (QPA) as well as a handful of independent contracts signed directly with the agencies (QPA # 12949, Master Services Agreement (2012)). With the 2017 Portal Services Contract including payment processing, there were now two standard offerings across the state: VPS via IDOA and Tyler Indiana via IOT's IN.gov program. VPS with IDOA was the primary QPA for payment processing services, whereas agencies received Tyler Indiana services as an additional service via IOT IN.gov. With coordination between IDOA and IOT, the VPS contract transitioned from IDOA to IOT management in 2021.

IOT issued an RFP in 2021 that concluded in October 2021, with both the incumbents, VPS and Tyler Indiana, awarded the new contracts. The new payment processing contracts included more services and lower fee rates across the board. The new contracts went into effect in October 2022 after a one-year transition period (QPA # 59726, Master Services Agreement (2022), QPA # 59725, Master Services Agreement (2022)).

### Current Services

With the start of the new Payment Processing QPA with two vendors, IOT introduced the Secondary Competitive Process (SCP). This is used in two situations: when an agency with no prior payment processing needs service and when an agency with an existing payment processing service and relationship wants to explore switching vendors. The two vendors have already completed a competitive bidding process for the QPA, hence the name "Secondary" Competitive Process.

The SCP is initiated by an agency requesting more information from IOT regarding payment processing options. The IOT Payment Processing team passes the agency a pre-designed Statement of Work (SOW) template, in which the agency details its payment processing needs and requirements. IOT sends the SOW to both payment processors, who have a defined

amount of time to ask questions and provide an implementation plan, including a detailed timeline, any subcontractors, and a high-level project plan. The agency can choose a processor based upon the implementation plan or request oral presentations. After the oral proposal, the agency notifies IOT of its selection.

Offering both vendors the same SOW and requirements and viewing the implementation plans side-by-side helps the agency more clearly evaluate its options.

As of June 2023, forty-eight State agencies and eighteen Local Government agencies have payment processing services via one of the state's payment processing vendors. IOT's support is primarily towards new services, outreach, and escalation. IOT conducts monthly business reviews with each vendor to discuss all ongoing projects, tickets, initiatives, and any issues or escalations. Day to day, the IOT team facilitates new agencies and existing agencies seeking a new service and kicking off the SCP. The team also serves as an escalation channel if an agency needs assistance with one of the vendors.

To aid agency insight into IOT's statutory payment processing responsibilities and to start payment processing services, IOT published a statewide policy matching the state statute in a portal easily accessible to state agencies. Local governments can get this information by contacting [ingovmanagement@iot.in.gov](mailto:ingovmanagement@iot.in.gov).

### New Opportunities

The payment processing statute established that an agency must use IOT's contracted vendors for services obtained through electronic access, such as licenses, permits, or fees. Traditionally, these services do not have physical or logical inventory limits. However, as agencies seek to streamline operations, more are turning to IOT's payment processing vendors for retail needs at events, such as the Indianapolis Boat, Sport, and Travel Show and Indiana State Fair Indiana Grown retail store. This opens the door to future opportunities to offer state-negotiated payment processing services to agencies with physical retail needs. In addition, IOT continues to focus on expanding state-negotiated services to local government throughout Indiana, including zero-cost payment processing services via the State.

### Portal-Related Third-Party Tools:

The IN.gov program manages several enterprise solutions and third-party tools that make the job easier for State and Local Government agency digital marketers and webmasters. The tools available include accessibility validation, analytics and data gathering, an online form builder, and more.

All the above tools are available through contracts negotiated and held by the IN.gov program. The IN.gov team manages the procurement and contract maintenance, and the vendors maintain the expected service.

In the future, the IN.gov program intends to combine most of these tools into the baseline of the web portal contract, simplifying the procurement process and helping to ensure the continuation of service for State and Local Government agencies.

## Local Government Services

### Beginnings & Development

IN.gov services for Local Government began long ago when IOT offered usage of the IN.gov subdomain. Agencies could request their own zero-cost IN.gov subdomain for their website or applications instead of using a .com or .org subdomain.

Use of an IN.gov subdomain with email addresses followed shortly after with the IOT DNS team offering MX records and DNS delegation to the provider of the local government's choice. However, IOT did not widely advertise the subdomain availability until 2020 after a change in IN.gov team leadership.

In early 2020, Gov. Holcomb appointed a new Chief Information Officer with a background in the Lieutenant Governor's office, an agency already strongly advocating for state services and support for local government. With the new administration, a formal Local Government initiative began to take shape. IN.gov started offering website design and hosting services in early 2020, providing Local Government agencies with the same design, hosting, and security as State agency websites. With this critical expansion, IN.gov developed and published naming standards to ensure that all government agencies in Indiana qualify for a unique, clearly identified IN.gov subdomain.

In 2021, IOT expanded its outreach by traveling to conferences with a strong presence in the local government community, such as the Association of Indiana Counties (AIC) Annual Conference and the Association of Indiana Municipalities (AIM) Ideas Summit. IOT created a formal process for agencies to request individualized presentations to learn more about the IN.gov services.

The same year, IOT and the Department of Health also entered a unique partnership to provide free, IN.gov-designed and hosted websites to every local health department across the state. Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, this endeavor offered free, secure and official websites to all county health departments, expanding service access to residents during a time of need.

With 2022 came the most-requested feature addition: IN.gov email. Despite having the previous capability to use an IN.gov email address with an existing service provider, agencies frequently requested some form of IOT service. IOT's IN.gov program began offering a complete email and collaboration suite via a leading service provider to Local Government agencies with an IN.gov email address. It has grown into one of our most successful and highest-growth services, with 34 local agencies taking advantage in the first year.

Another significant improvement to Local Government Services is the Executive Authorization form. In the past, customers had to submit signed authorization specific to each request. The IN.gov team scrutinized every submission to ensure the agency authorized the requestor. The process was cumbersome, as hired IT professionals had to draft a letter for each request and chase down a signature for every DNS change. IOT sought to streamline and improve the user experience and standardize submissions to facilitate vetting. Thus, IOT created the Executive Authorization form: a standardized form that must be completed annually and signed by an elected or appointed official authorizing all personnel who can make service requests on the agency's behalf.

Finally, in 2022 the IN.gov team joined the IOT Security team, Department of Education, and Department of Homeland Security in visiting every county in Indiana on a "Listening Tour." At these events, local county, township, municipal, education, and library representatives were invited to discuss their challenges and service needs from state government and learn more details on all the available services provided via the state.

### Local Government Services Offered

As of June 2023, IOT offers eight categories of services to Local Government agencies, of which IN.gov contributes five: IN.gov Domain and DNS Services, Website Design & Hosting, IN.gov Email & Collaboration Suite, Access Indiana, and Payment Processing.

IOT provides the IN.gov subdomain and all associated DNS management to local government agencies at zero cost. Agencies who qualify for this service must meet the criteria of a Political Subdivision as defined in IC § 36-1-2-13. This includes K-12 public schools and public libraries, as well as various special tax districts (Political subdivision, Local Government, [IC 36-1-2-13](#)).

Additional zero-cost services include the state's Single-Sign-On portal, Access Indiana, for use with public-facing and internal applications and payment processing with one of the State's two contracted vendors using the convenience fee model. The convenience fee model passes credit card processing fees through to the customer. Payment processing at zero cost is available to local government via IC § 36-1-7-12, which allows Indiana government entities to purchase from state-negotiated Quantity Purchase Agreements and contracts (Purchase, sale, or exchange of services, supplies, or equipment, Local Government, [IC 36-1-7-12](#) (2022)).

Services with a fee associated are offered at low, state-negotiated rates and only cover the cost of administering these services. These include Website Design & Hosting Services and IN.gov Email and Collaboration Suite. IN.gov offers the same award-winning website templates and hosting services used by state agencies to local government in Indiana at three package tiers: Basic, Professional, and Enterprise level. All three packages include a customized website using an IN.gov template, access to our easy-to-use content management system, and training for the system. Higher package tiers have additional licensing, access to third-party tools, and a higher level of support. There are no implementation costs and no contracts. IN.gov only charges a monthly fee to cover hosting and license costs (*Local Government Website Design and Hosting*. (n.d.). Retrieved May 12, 2023. <https://www.in.gov/inwp/local-government/local-government-website-design-and-hosting/>).

IOT offers IN.gov Email and Collaboration Suite at three affordable tiers to meet a wide range of government needs: Enterprise Basic, Enterprise Standard, and Enterprise Plus. Each level includes the productivity and collaboration suite and an IN.gov email address to meet the increasing demand for secure and validated government email. Higher tiers have additional security and storage features (*Local Government Email and Collaboration Suite*. (n.d.). Retrieved May 12, 2023. <https://www.in.gov/inwp/local-government/email/>). This service remains popular as federal grant programs increasingly require a .gov email address to apply for funding, and cybersecurity insurance requires secure, non-personal email accounts. The IN.gov Email and Collaboration Suite meets both requirements at a low, affordable rate.

The IN.gov team conducts outreach to local government agencies that could benefit from our services and facilitate setting up and onboarding new customers. An IN.gov representative attends all major conferences in the state for local government, including but not limited to the AIC Annual Conference and the AIM Ideas Summit. An IN.gov representative also attended every county meeting in 2022 and continues to attend IOT-hosted regional events.

### Current Customers and Future Direction

Currently, IN.gov is used for nearly 1,000 subdomains by over 250 distinct agencies. IN.gov has designed and, as of June 2023, hosts 70 websites for local government, and 40 agencies are using IN.gov Email & Collaboration Suite, serving more than 1,200 users. Two agencies have begun using our SSO and application authentication. All IN.gov services continue to grow in popularity across counties, townships, and municipalities.

IN.gov is receiving growing interest from public libraries and K-12 school systems, as they will also benefit from the security and validation of using an IN.gov domain. Later this year, IN.gov will launch a new self-service portal using our SSO and authentication to facilitate IN.gov subdomain and DNS requests and management. The new portal will have a user-friendly interface, streamline request submission, and allow annual IN.gov subdomain renewal and

multiple DNS changes in a single request. IN.gov constantly seeks new ways to expand services and improve local government user experience.

## Conclusion

The IN.gov team has grown exponentially since coming under new management. To improve customer support and contract management, the team internally developed processes and created a collective Book of Knowledge containing all relevant program and process documentation accessible to the team immediately. Externally, the IOT IN.gov Management team has grown a strong and approachable customer presence, from attending meetings to timely and supportive email responses to inquiries. We provide multiple tiers of customer support, from entry-level service requests to escalation channels. We do not strive to meet SLAs; we beat them.

Refining the user experience with IN.gov services drives a spirit of constant innovation and improvement within the team. This year, IN.gov will launch the new IN.gov Subdomain Self-Service Portal to streamline agency service requests and add a layer of security and authentication via Access Indiana. To enhance internal processes and budgeting, IN.gov is working to include all major third-party tools in the baseline for the IN.gov program.

The State of Indiana is preparing for the future in multiple ways. One major step that will be foundational to support the future vision and strategy for the State will be through our IN.gov web presence and the way we connect services to our constituents. To achieve the highest level of success today and in the future, IOT will always strive to engage with solutions that can genuinely partner alongside the State to ensure that Indiana remains at the forefront of digital government experience and continuously improves to keep up with the ever-changing technology landscape—forever striving to serve our customers the best we can.